Congratulations on initiating a meaningful, experiential educational, travel opportunity for you and your students!

At Smithsonian Student Adventures (SSA), we recognize that recruiting students for participation in a travel program will require time and effort, above and beyond your normal duties. That is why we make every effort to make this process as streamlined and simple as possible for you.

The following is a helpful guide that pulls together advice and strategies that our veteran teachers have employed to recruit students year after year for their successful travel programs. While these are time-tested strategies that we believe will work well for you, every school, classroom, and educator is different. Be creative! Let us know what works and what doesn’t, and always reach out if you feel there is anything we can do to support you in your efforts. You will find that after your first big wave of enrollments comes in, the job only gets easier and more fun from there on out!
RECRUITING

After you have your program set, it’s time to start recruiting your student travelers! Like all good curriculum planning, we suggest that you work backwards from your goal and create a schedule. We recommend hosting one event per month and reaching out to 10 times the number of students you hope to recruit. Working along with your representative at SSA, you should set a deadline for registrations and send frequent reminders to students via email, messages on the whiteboard, posting in the school newsletter, and “plugging” in the morning announcements.

You will receive a Promo Packet in the mail that includes a customized PDF flier, a super soft Smithsonian Student Adventures t-shirt and a poster with information specific to your program. Hang the poster in your room and use the printable PDF flier (you will also receive an interactive electronic copy) to post in hallways, hand out to colleagues for them to share, as well as to pass out to students and to parents.

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RECRUITING STRATEGIES

1. Announce the program during the year prior to your travel. If you are traveling multiple years in a row, get a head start on your recruitment by letting your current and former students know about your plans. Your alumni students and their siblings can be your strongest resource!

2. Announce the program in your classes and encourage other faculty to do the same. Disseminate your program web page URL so that students and their parents can access the itinerary and all the additional information housed on your program's web page.

3. Create Student Ambassadors. This is a big one! Your students are the best ambassadors for your program—they want their friends to join them on this adventure of a lifetime! Encourage them to help recruit their friends and share information through social media.

4. Schedule a visit from your SSA Rep, preferably in person but a virtual visit also works! Have a representative visit your classroom to get students excited about SSA and promote your program.

5. Social Media posting is huge. Create regular posts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and more. The more you can post across a wide array of platforms, the better. Share colorful images of your destinations. Be sure to use #SmithsonianSAS in your posts, and if you are able, make them public so that they are searchable.

6. Ask your colleagues to lend a hand. Enlist the help of fellow teachers by asking them to host a SSA presentation, hang up posters and invite their students to Info Sessions. This can be even more effective if you have colleagues in different schools - ask for their support too!

7. School Announcements. Put regular announcements about your program, meeting dates, application deadlines, and fundraisers on the school announcements. Be sure to include where and how students can sign up and the deadline to register.

8. School Paper. Put an ad or an editorial in the school paper about your program. You can describe the destinations and what students will learn. Tell them where to sign up and the deadline. Let us know if you need a great picture or blurb about your program for the paper - we are always happy to help!

9. Back to School Night. Include information about your program in materials that are created for Back to School Night.

10. Parent-Teacher Conferences. Mention your program during your Parent-Teacher Conferences. This is a great opportunity to invite parents to an Info Session.
Schedule as many Info Sessions as you feel necessary. You will want to get as many interested students and parents to your Info Session as possible. You can send email or letter invitations, or send a notice home with your students. We recommend you send at least three, and up to eight invitations to ensure one reaches parents.

During your Info Sessions you should:

• Introduce Smithsonian Student Adventures and discuss why you chose to travel with us.

• Share your Program Webpage. Share the URL, and emphasize that this is where the most up-to-date information about the program can be accessed. The webpage will include the email address of a SSA Representative, to whom you should encourage parents to reach out with any questions.

• Share the dates of your program, review the itinerary and describe the destinations.

• Share your learning and/or service goals for the program.

• Discuss the tuition, including both inclusions and exclusions.

• Discuss the type of travel (only your group with a SSA leader, homestays, hotels, private transport, etc).

• Take questions. A SSA Director can be on Skype to assist with these. Just contact your representative with a couple of weeks notice.

• Show everyone exactly where to register and give them the registration deadline.

• Collect contact information from everyone in attendance and send it to us so we can assist with reminders. Better yet, have parents and students fill out our registration form at the meeting!

• Give everyone a reference sheet (if you do not have this yet, please ask your SSA representative to email you one and you can print several copies in advance of the meeting). Encourage parents to contact the references or SSA directly with questions. It is great for parents to speak with other parents whose children have enjoyed a SSA program in the past.
Fundraising can be a great way for the group to come together, get to know one another and work towards a common goal all while helping offset the cost of the program. In addition to the Fundraising 101 Guide, here are additional tips and strategies that might be helpful:

Set a Goal. Have a clear goal for how much money you want to raise as a group and/or per student.

Make a Schedule. Determine how long you want to fundraise and/or the start and end dates of each activity. Having set deadlines in mind will help students stay motivated. Keep in mind that the sooner you start recruiting, the sooner you can begin fundraising, which will be helpful in covering the cost of a program.

Choose Activities. Determine, as a group, what activities you will pursue. Here are a few examples:

- Community Organizations – Seek donations from organizations such as the Rotary Club or Kiwanis Club.
- Group Fundraisers – Participate in a group fundraiser such as a Coffee Fundraiser, a car wash, or a bake sale. Justfundraising.com has dozens of group fundraising ideas and packages.
- Letter Writing Campaign – Have students write individual letters to friends, family, and/or local businesses seeking donations. Have them detail why they want to participate in the program and how it will further their personal and academic goals. You can find a list of businesses from your local Chamber of Commerce. This can be particularly effective with local restaurants. It can also be helpful to deliver the letters in person. Just ask for the manager when you walk in, hand them the letter, explain why you want to travel, and ask for their support! Sample letters can be found in the back of the Fundraising 101” packet.
- Local Events – Many restaurants, cafes, grocery stores or bars (parents only!) will host fundraising events where a group can reserve a time and a percentage of sales during that time go back to the group. You and your students can ask around at favorite spots to see if a local business might want to partner on an event.
- School-wide Raffle – Get donations from parents, teachers, or local businesses of gift certificates, merchandise, or other prizes and have a school-wide raffle.
- DonorsChoose.org – Public school teachers can seek donations from the public by listing your program on the DonorsChoose.org website under Field Trips.

Celebrate! When you reach benchmarks or complete a fundraising goal, mark your group’s accomplishment with a celebration such as an ice cream or pizza party.
HOW TO TALK TO YOUR ADMINISTRATION

Though many teachers organize student programs of their own (independent of their school or district), we understand that the success of your program may sometimes hinge on the approval of your administration. If you need permission from your principal or school board, below are some “tried-and-true” tips and strategies for gaining support for your program.

FIRST, ARRANGE A 1-ON-1 MEETING WITH YOUR ADMINISTRATORS.

In this meeting you should:
• Share your personalized program website.
• Review the complete itinerary.
• Explain your learning or service goals and how they fit into your curriculum and/or meet school requirements.
• Provide a list of SSA references in your area and/or across the country that they can contact. (If you have already spoken with a reference in your region and can relay their experience, even better!)
• Provide the contact information for your SSA Representative, who can answer any detailed questions that you don't have the answers for.
• Explain the travel insurance plan for students.
• Share the SSA Safety Statement and Liability Policy.

LIABILITY POLICY

Smithsonian Student Adventures carries a Travel Agents and Tour Operators Professional Liability Policy with Steadfast Insurance Company. Individuals, schools, or districts can be added to our policy by written agreement. Smithsonian Student Adventures can also provide a certificate of coverage that details the full

SAFETY STATEMENT

The safety of our participants is our top priority at SSA. Our in-country staff meticulously prepares for all programs by verifying the driving record and registration of drivers, confirming the safety of all excursions, vetting homestay families through interviews and home visits and keeping up on important current events and weather patterns. Our leaders are fluent in the local language and well traveled. Leaders also undergo thorough training in CPR, First Aid, program management, and emergency protocols. We do our best to prepare for any eventuality and have detailed emergency protocols for our leaders, in-country staff and US-based staff to ensure the wellbeing of all participants at all times. SSA also gets medical releases from students to prepare for any physical, mental, or emotional conditions. In addition, students and parents sign the.
following Standards of Behavior that detail our zero-tolerance policies and the consequences of misbehavior. Furthermore, our in-country staff registers each itinerary and every traveler with the U.S. Department of State’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) ensuring that we maintain communication with the nearest Embassy about safety conditions in your destination country, helping make informed decisions about travel plans and providing another layer of support to help us stay safe, stay informed and stay connected.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

Smithsonian Student Adventures aims to provide significant, impacting and fun programs for our participants. In order to achieve this goal, SSA and its participants need to create an environment of trust, security and respect. All individuals participating in SSA programs are required to take responsibility for their actions and adhere to a high standard of behavior. Any of the following, at the discretion of SSA, are grounds for early dismissal from the program:

1. Possessing, consuming or distributing alcohol, drugs, or tobacco.
2. Associating with participants while they are in possession of or are consuming or distributing alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs.
3. Getting a piercing or tattoo.
4. Stealing, or deliberately damaging or defacing any personal property, buildings or materials.
5. Riding any type of unauthorized vehicles.
6. Boys visiting girls’ rooms, or vice versa without permission.
7. Behaving in a way that consistently damages the group dynamic or jeopardizes personal or group safety. This includes consistently displaying a negative attitude, sneaking out, disobey group leaders, intimidating or excluding other participants, and any other behavior that is not conducive to an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.

These standards are essential for the successful completion of a program. If a participant breaks any of these standards of behavior, or acts in a way that is harmful to the operation of the program, he/she may be dismissed and sent home early at his/her own expense.

NEXT, INVITE KEY ADMINISTRATORS TO INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

you’ll organize for interested families so they can learn more about your program and ask questions of a SSA Director.

AND FINALLY, INCLUDE THEM IN YOUR FUNDRAISING EFFORTS.

Once your program is off the ground, let us know their contact information and we can send them updates and blog posts regarding your group’s progress and accomplishments.

Congratulations again on choosing Smithsonian Student Adventures. As always, contact us with any questions you have along the way. We can’t wait to see you abroad soon!